



**Alpha Company tops the tower, descends**  
**Pg 4**

MARINE CORPS RECRUIT DEPOT SAN DIEGO



AND THE WESTERN RECRUITING REGION



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“WHERE MARINES ARE MADE”

FRIDAY, AUGUST 28, 2015

# Company honorman displays his hard work

STORY & PHOTO BY  
CPL. JERICHO W. CRUTCHER  
*Chevron staff*

“When you live for a strong purpose, then hard work isn’t an option,” said Steve Pavlina, an American author. “It’s a necessity.”

Private First Class Christopher M. Gardner, Mike Company, 3rd Recruit Training Battalion, grew up in Richmond, Mo., a small town of 5,000 citizens, where the land was for farming and the football fields were the glue that kept the community together.

“Everyone knows everyone in a small town,” said 18-year-old Gardner. “Football is the talk of the town, and on game day, everyone is there ready to see some contact.”

There wasn’t much to do in the small farm town, so by the age of 10, Gardner was competing in football and wrestling. During his off time, he practiced his skills in karate as well as soccer.

“I love to compete and do some kind of sport that involves a brotherhood and shared misery between a group of guys putting in the hard work,” said Gardner. “Me and my brother spent a lot of time in the yard wrestling each other until we were both out of energy.”

Gardner and his brother are about as close as two brothers could be. They both competed on the wrestling and football teams together, but eventually they went separate ways.

“I love football, and when I started receiving scholarship offers, I was thankful I could further my football career,” said the 6-foot-1-inch tall linebacker. “My brother, on the other hand, is really good at wrestling. He’s 16 years old and ranked in the top ten in the nation. I know he’ll pursue his wrestling career in college.”

Gardner explains his father was a big inspiration on his brother and him and always encouraged them to stay active in sports and school.

“After my father passed away when I was 13, I stayed motivated and kept competing because I know he would’ve wanted that for me,” said Gardner.

Competition wasn’t the only thing on the young man’s mind. He had something else he felt he needed to complete.

In the family’s garage sat an ‘88 Fox Body Mustang, which they were going to bring back to life.

“He bought it for a father-son project,” said Gardner. “I decided I was going to finish it in his memory, and it was easy at first.”

The car was stolen from the garage and when they found it, there wasn’t much left other than the body and the motor.



**Private First Class Christopher M. Gardner, Mike Company, 3rd Recruit Training Battalion, executes pull-ups during a physical fitness session at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, Aug. 24. Following today’s graduation ceremony, Gardner will attend the School of Infantry at Camp Pendleton, Calif., where he will go through Marine Combat Training. Upon completion of MCT, he will pursue his military occupational specialty as a field radio operator.**

“Once I got the car back, I started working different jobs to earn the money to fix it,” said Gardner. “I was driving the car down the road by age 16 and still drive it today.”

Gardner’s father not only motivated him to be an athlete and car enthusiast, but also he gave him the inspiration he needed to join the military.

“My father was an Army Airborne Ranger, and that always kept my interest sparked with the military,” said the new Marine.

Gardner will be a reservist in the Marine Corps, which gives him the opportunity to go to college and pursue his football career.

“I received offers from a few places, but I decided to go with Wartburg College in Waverly, Iowa,” said Gardner. “After I graduate, I plan to attend Officer Candidate School to become an officer in the Marine Corps.”

Before he can hit the gridiron though, he will be attending the School of Infantry in Camp

Pendleton, Calif., where he will go through Marine Combat Training. Upon completion of MCT, he will pursue his military occupational specialty as a field radio operator. Following his Marine Corps training, he will begin his dream of playing football, too.

“I’m honored to be graduating with my platoon and as the company honorman,” said Gardner. “My drill instructors trained me well, and I look forward to my future experiences with the Corps.”

## BRIEFS

### Gate 4 closure

Gate 4 is closed to all vehicular and pedestrian traffic until construction is completed in December.

During Gate 4 renovation, operating hours of Gates 2 and 5 will be as follows:

#### Gate 2:

Open 5 a.m. to 10 p.m. seven days a week

#### Gate 5:

Open 24 hours

### New Marine Family Meet & Greet

The depot hosts a New Marine Family Meet and Greet each Wednesday prior to graduation from 5 to 8 p.m., at the Bay View Restaurant.

This is a chance for families to meet other new Marine families and depot drill instructors. The event price of \$21.95 per person entitles the purchaser to a steak or chicken dinner. Dinner service starts at 6 p.m.

For information and reservations go to [www.mcrdmeetandgreet.eventbrite.com](http://www.mcrdmeetandgreet.eventbrite.com) or call (619) 725-6388.

### Career & Education Fair

The depot will sponsor a Career and Education Fair Sept. 15 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Jerry Coleman Center (formerly the Semper Fit Field House & Courtyard).

Participants will meet face-to-face with the representatives of more than 100 veteran friendly employers and educators who are prepared to discuss your future.

Dress to impress and bring copies of your resume.

For information call (619) 524-1283 or 5728.

### Boot Camp Challenge

The depot’s annual 3-mile obstacle run, the Boot Camp Challenge, pits Marines and civilians against an obstacle course featuring obstacles faced by recruits during training.

The event is scheduled for Sept. 26. at 9 a.m. Runners will be encouraged by depot drill instructors along the way.

Cost to register and participate in the event is:

- \$39 for individual runners
- \$117 for a 3 person team
- \$195 for a 5 person team
- \$45 per person at the gate on Boot Camp Challenge day.

For registration and information go to [www.BootCamp-Challenge.com](http://www.BootCamp-Challenge.com)

### Send briefs to:

[rdsd\\_pao@usmc.mil](mailto:rdsd_pao@usmc.mil). The Chevron staff reserves the right to publish only those briefs that comply with Department of Defense regulations and the standards of the U.S. Government.



# Recon Marines hang with HMLA-369

STORY & PHOTOS BY  
PFC. DEVAN GOWANS  
*I Marine Expeditionary Force*

**CAMP PENDLETON, Calif.**  
– As clouds of dust from the rotor wash of a UH-1Y Huey helicopter cleared and Marines dismounted the fast-rope, Gunnery Sgt. Brett Lane, a platoon

sergeant with Company A, 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, charges through the wash to clear the cable from the landing zone. Approximately 40 Marines with Company A conducted a fast-rope and Special Patrol Insertion and Extraction rigging

exercise aboard Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., Aug. 18. The purpose of the exercise was to familiarize reconnaissance Marines with insertion methods and allow them to become more comfortable working with the Air Combat Element of the Marine Air-

Ground Task Force. Medium Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 369 piloted two UH-1Y Huey helicopters to assist in the fast-roping and SPIE rigging operations. Sticks of Marines entered the Huey helicopters and waited in the hovering aircraft before practicing insertion by

the fast-rope method. Following this portion of the training, the Marines hooked onto a SPIE cable by pairs and suspended from the helicopter as it flew a route around the training area. The SPIE rigging is set up to free the Marines’ arms, allowing them to hold onto extra gear while inserting into difficult terrain. Once the Marines touched down, they cleared the landing zone to allow the helicopter to land. According to Lance Cpl. Mark Toub, a team member with the company, the reconnaissance Marines’ operations may require the need for quick insertion and extraction into inaccessible terrain. SPIE rigging and fast-roping techniques create a solution for the rapid deployment of troops into areas where aircraft and other vehicles cannot navigate. Because the Ground Combat Element and Air Combat Element rely on the support of each other in many operations, insertion and extraction training allows for pilots and crew chiefs to understand what it’s like flying with members of the ground units. Sergeant Dakota Moist, a UH-1Y Huey crew chief with HMLA 369, served as a crew chief for one of the aircraft during the operation. His tasks were to conduct the string of events occurring inside the aircraft, eliminating any problems that arise inside the cabin and ensuring that all Marines exited the helicopter safely once given the command. “There’s a lot for the air wing to gain from working with ground troops,” Moist said. “It’s a lot more realistic and it allows some of the junior crew chiefs who haven’t deployed to see what it’s like to work with these ground units.” Training exercises involving insertion and extraction tactics help foster a well-coordinated training environment and sharpen, as well as increase, the operational readiness of the Ground Combat Element and Air Combat Element of I Marine Expeditionary Force.




Marines from Company A, 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, are suspended from a UH-1Y Huey helicopter during an exercise on Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., Aug. 18, 2015. Utilizing both fast-roping and Special Patrol Insertion and Extraction rigging methods, the purpose of the training exercise was to integrate operational coordination between the I MEF Ground Combat Element and Air Combat Element.

## America’s Prepareathon: Be smart, take part, prepare

National Preparedness Month is a nationwide effort held each September, to encourage Americans to take simple steps to prepare for emergencies in their homes, businesses and schools.

National Preparedness Month 2015 is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. The goal of the campaign is to increase public awareness about the importance of preparing on

an individual and community level. Depot officials will be sharing preparedness information throughout the installation using brochures, preparedness plans, informative documents, and social media. Be sure to check the Family Readiness Office eMarine sites, Facebook and the MCRDSD Website. Individuals are also encouraged to check out the Emergency Preparedness Link on the Depot Website at <http://www.mcrdspd.marines.mil/DepotInformation/EmergencyPreparedness.aspx>. For more information contact AC/S G-3 Mission Assurance at 619-524-8432.



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HONOR  
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# MIKE COMPANY

3rd RECRUIT TRAINING BATTALION

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Battalion Drill Master

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Sgt. Maj. J. D. Ferriss  
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S. B. Horsley Pvt. G. E. Hunt Pvt. C. A. Jacobs Pvt. K. W. Kopp Pvt. Q. T. Lord Pfc. S. A. Macias Pvt. J. Magana Pvt. A. A. Magana Pfc. D. H. Mancilla Pvt. J. E. Mankis Pvt. M. J. Mashak Pvt. S. L. McFadden Pvt. R. A. Mezapineda Pfc. M. D. Mosley Pvt. K. A. Okes Pfc. A. C. Patrick Pfc. R. A. Penno Pvt. J. B. Perez Pfc. A. L. Peters Pvt. R. A. Peters Pfc. B. G. Peters III Pfc. C. S. Redhouse Pvt. A. L. Reil Pvt. N. J. Riner Pvt. C. T. Robertson Pvt. A. J. Roland Pvt. J. S. Rueda Pvt. J. M. Scheving Pfc. M. P. Seinen *Pfc. D. L. Sharps Pfc. J. J. Shelley Pvt. B. L. Shifflett Pvt. A. K. Simon Pvt. D. R. Smiley Pvt. K. Smith Pvt. C. E. Smithson Pfc. A. R. Sorge Pvt. J. A. Sowden Pvt. A. C. Sprague Pfc. D. N. Stackpole Pfc. B. C. Stanford Pvt. G. R. Stone Pvt. T. J. Sutton Pvt. T. N. Thiel Pfc. A. T. Tucci Pvt. D. W. Uder Pvt. B. P. Uzundu Pfc. E. R. Waggoner Pfc. E. F. Waldhoff Pfc. F. Wang Pvt. I. D. Washington Pvt. B. A. Weems Pvt. A. A. White Pfc. J. E. White *Pfc. C. L. Williams Pfc. Z. T. Yeager
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A recruit of Alpha Company, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, descends the rappel tower at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, Calif., Aug. 21. The tower instills confidence in the recruits by having them face their fears and successfully conquer the 60-foot structure. Alpha Company will graduate recruit training Sept. 4.

# Alpha Company recruits check off Rappel Tower

STORY & PHOTOS BY  
CPL. TYLER VIGLIONE  
*Chevron staff*

Recruits looked up at the tower. Some had never been through anything quite like this, but they all had one thing in common, they had to complete it.

Soon to be Marines of Alpha Company, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, built confidence in themselves by conquering the rappel tower aboard the depot, Aug. 21.

“The purpose of the rappel tower is to build self confidence in the recruits,” said Staff Sgt. Travis A. Titopace, drill instructor, Instructional Training Company, Support Battalion. “It’s something that they have built up to since the beginning of recruit training.”

Alpha Company recruits began the event by receiving a class from one of the ITC instructors about the proper techniques to descend the rope. They were taught how to use their “strong hand” and “brake hand” to control themselves.

Sitting there staring at the tower, a recruit was already battling with the upcoming challenge.

“I have always liked the adrenaline rush,” said Recruit Vince K. Crisostomo, Alpha Company. “It was a little nerve wracking looking up at the tower, but I was excited to do it.”

First was the fast rope, a method used to quickly insert troops into an area by air. Recruits slid down a 15-foot rope while grabbing it tightly and wrapping their feet around it. Due to the short distance of the rope, once a recruit hit the ground, he needed to quickly get out of the way as the next recruit came down above them.

The last and most challenging part of the event was the 60-foot rappel descent.

“The wall is always the toughest thing for recruits,” said Titopace. “They see how high it is and about one-third of them openly admit to being scared of heights, so it’s where the nerves

start to get the best of them”

During this event, recruits were taught how to tie a rappel seat with a rope and shown the safety precautions. The ITC instructor leaned off the edge of the platform without holding the rope, showing that recruits won’t fall from the top and hit the ground. To further reinforce this point, drill instructors rappelled from the top and purposefully let go of the rope, entering a free-fall, but quickly came to a stop once the drill instructor at

the bottom pulled the rope tight.

Recruits lined up, and one by one, ascended to the top of the tower.

With each step up the tower, recruits were gaining confidence, a valuable asset required in their career in the Corps confidence.

Once at the top, recruits were put in one of two lines, either the side-wall rappel or the center hole, which simulates the “hell hole” of a helicopter. After facing their fears and rappelling from the tower, recruits began

to realize what this training accomplished for them.

“It all goes back to the beginning of training,” said Crisostomo, a native of Westminster, Calif. “Throughout the course of training, we did things like the Confidence Course or the O-Course, which built up that confidence that made us know we could push past this, too.”

Alpha Company recruits left the rappel tower with a new outlook and attitude in regard to what they could accomplish.

They will need it as they head to the Crucible in the next few days where they will face even tougher challenges before earning the title Marine.

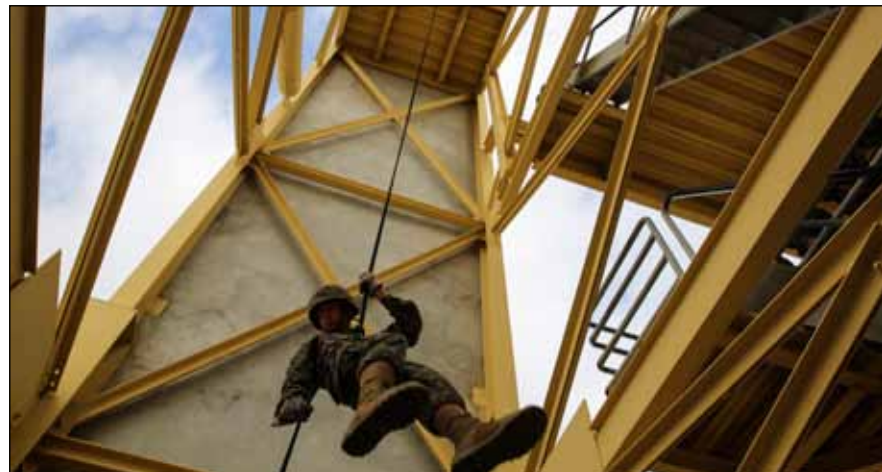
“Most of these recruits will never see this again in their careers,” said Titopace. “It is more about them knowing that they can do something even though they are terrified. They feel a sense of accomplishment when they land on the ground and walk away, they are more confident.”



Alpha Company recruits do a fast rope descent during their rappel tower event Aug. 21. Recruits began the event by learning the techniques of fast roping.



Recruits learn how to tie a harness during the rappel tower event at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, Calif., Aug. 21. An instructor explained the process and allowed the recruits to follow along and tie their harnesses. Following the class, recruits went through multiple inspections to ensure they were ready for their descent from the tower.



An Alpha Company recruit fast ropes from the depot's rappel tower Aug. 21. One of the techniques recruits learn is to apply a “brake hand” to the rope to adjust speed while descending. The recruits use gloves to protect their hands as well as to serve as an extra grip on the rope. A helmet and harness were worn for safety.